

SHEAN, CHARLES M.

DRAWER 19A

Antique - S

M. 2009. 085. 02572

Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Charles M. Shean

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

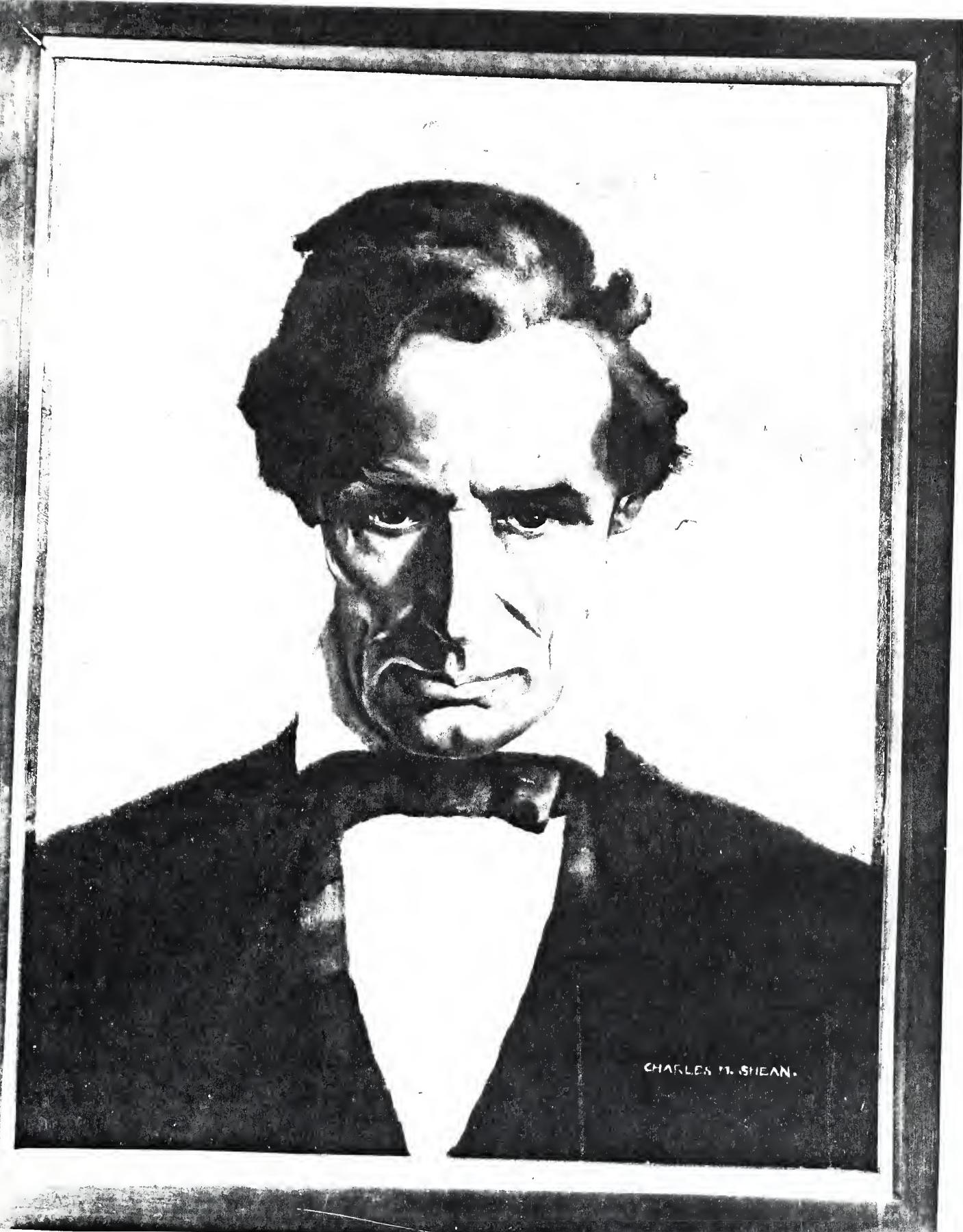


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PHOTOCOPY

(original in safe)



CHARLES M. SHEAN.



UNVEILING OF
PORTRAIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

In Commemoration of the
Fiftieth Anniversary of the Admission of Nevada
into the Union "upon an equal footing
with the Original States"

ASSEMBLY CHAMBER
Carson City, March 14, 1915

THE SHEAN LINCOLN

The Lincoln portrait this day unveiled is the product of the American artist, Charles M. Shean of New York. Mr. Shean was a student of art at the Art Students' League, New York and Paris, and is a member of the National Society of Mural Painters and of the Architectural League of New York. He was awarded a medal for mural painting at the St. Louis Exposition, 1904. Author of "A Plea for Americanism in the Decoration of Public Buildings" and of "Mural Painting from the American Point of View."

Relative to the Lincoln portrait, Mr. Shean says:

"The painting is an original work and * * * is the result of months of close study in which all possible material was exhaustively studied and compared. Every effort has been made to produce a characteristic and lifelike portrait and one which I am convineed has the value of a historical document."

Ida M. Tarbell, one of Lincoln's biographers, has written of this portrait: "It is one of the few—Oh, very few!—paintings of Mr. Lincoln which I have seen, which I felt was worth while."

"It deserves," says Horatio C. King, son of Horatio King of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet, "to be the accepted likeness for all time."

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

3:30 p. m.

Overture	Carson Band
Invocation	Rev. Lloyd B. Thomas
Music—Star-Spangled Banner	Carson Band
During the playing of this selection the Portrait will be unveiled by Master Lewis Hamilton Beason and Master Abraham Lincoln Kendall.	
Presentation of Portrait on behalf of the Lincoln Portrait Committee	Governor Emmet D. Boyle
Song—My Own United States	University Quartette
Reading—The Perfect Tribute	Adele C. Norcross
Song	University Quartette
The Soldiers of the Blue and the Gray	Hon. H. F. Bartine
Music—Medley of National Airs	Carson Band
Address	Hon. George A. Bartlett
Music—America	Carson Band
	Audience requested to join in singing.

LINCOLN PORTRAIT COMMITTEE

Created by Act of the Legislature, approved March 4, 1915

Hon. Emmet D. Boyle ----- Governor
Hon. Frank H. Norcross----- Chief Justice
Hon. Maurice J. Sullivan----- President of the Senate
Hon. Allen G. McBride ----- Speaker of the Assembly
Hon. George F. Talbot----- President State Historical Society

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS

On behalf of the Senate:

Hon. Milton L. Lee,
Hon. W. P. Harrington,
Hon. W. A. Keddie,

On behalf of the Assembly:

Hon. Lewis H. Beason,
Hon. James E. Babcock,
Hon. J. W. Ferguson.



LINCOLN IN TWO ARTISTS' VIEWS

Widely Different Versions Are Revealed.

ONE PAINTED FROM LIFE

Other From the Records With Higher Truth as Aim.

Two more portraits of Abraham Lincoln have recently come to light. One painted from life by Daniel Huntington and removed from public sight since 1884; the other a work based on a study of all available records and painted by the late Charles H. Shean. The first is now on view at the Macbeth Galleries, the other is being shown at the Grant Studios, 114 Remsen street, Brooklyn. Taken together, they afford a basis for speculation as to what portrait of Lincoln should be accepted as really revealing the man.

Robert Willson of 24 Bank street, who has made an exhaustive study of the subject and has long been interested in the preservation and perpetuation of a proper portrait of Lincoln, furnishes interesting details concerning the Shean canvas and others that the artist painted of the same subject.

Shean, who died in 1925, was primarily a mural painter. He laid out the color scheme for the murals in the 'old' Waldorf-Astoria, and later was commissioned to do the murals in the Hotel Plaza, Hotel Manhattan, Claridge and Martinique. At the height of his career in this field he became convinced of the inadequacy of the existing portraits of Lincoln and gave up virtually all other work to endeavor to supply the deficiency.

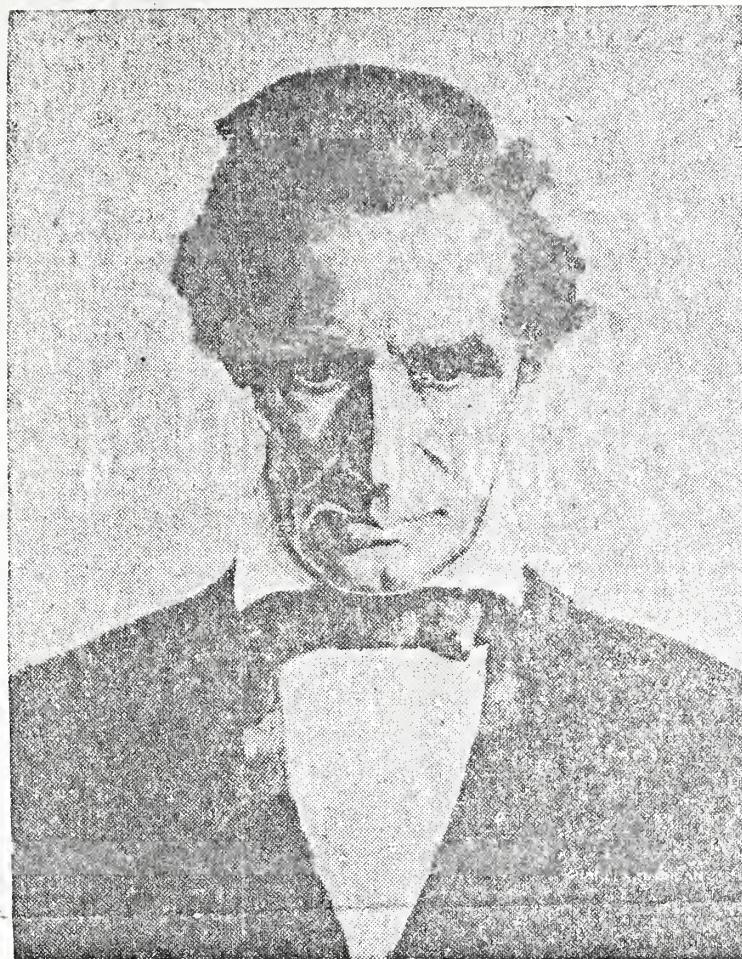
Thought Them Unsatisfactory.

"He held the opinion," Mr. Willson said, "that many—too many, in fact—of the alleged portraits of Lincoln went unwarrantably to one extreme or the other—that is, in an excess of endeavor to paint a perfect likeness, an awkward, boorish, uncouth picture, little more than a caricature was produced; or in going to the other extreme the attempt often led to an idealism which failed to develop the great ability, depth of character, purposeful power and indomitable will that marked the real Lincoln."

"He spent several years in pursuit of all available Lincoln material, devoted many months to studying the many photographs and pictures as well as the masks, from that of Volk in 1860 to the Mills mask of 1865.

"The result of his research work and his series of life-size sketches and study after study finally resulted in what Mr. Shean believed to be an actually adequate portrait of the great Lincoln—accurate without being grotesque, full of beauty of

TWO NEW VERSIONS OF LINCOLN



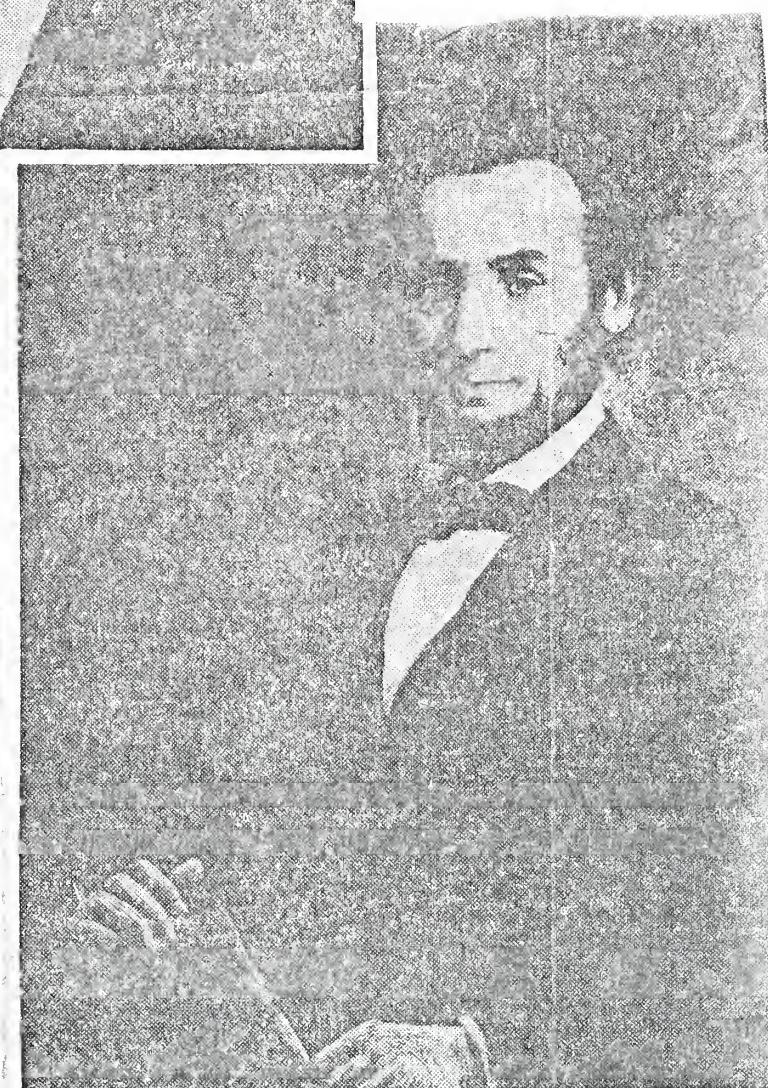
From the portrait painted by the late Charles H. Shean. Shown at the Grant Studios, 114 Remsen street, Brooklyn.

the post of vice-president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"It is to be assumed that Huntington liked these himself well enough to keep them by him, for they do not appear on a list of portraits (carefully kept by him) which he painted to order and listed as he turned them over to the sitters.

"In 1884 the portraits were sold to a family named De Witt, as evidenced by a letter which the Macbeth Gallery has on record from the artist's secretary to Mr. De Witt. The paintings have remained in the De Witt family since that time."

This portrait of Lincoln, by the way, has already been sold to a Western collector, though it and the companion canvas will remain on view at the gallery for the next two weeks.



From the portrait painted from life by Daniel Huntington on view at the Macbeth Galleries.

soul and character without being idealized beyond any resemblance to the man sought to be portrayed.

"In 1915 when the Nevada State Commission took up the matter of a Lincoln portrait to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the 'battle-born' State they went to Washington, to the Corcoran Gallery and elsewhere, asking for advice as to whom to intrust the commission. They were referred to Irving R. Wiles as the then foremost portrait painter in America. They came to New York and consulted Wiles, who declined the commission on the ground that Shean had produced the best portrait of Lincoln extant, and Wiles therefore sent them to him.

"The State of Nevada then obtained what many competent authorities have described as the best portrait of Lincoln.

"Shean painted various other portraits of Lincoln, differing in details of pose, but all characterized by the same expression of soul and character."

The Shean Lincoln portraits now shown in Brooklyn--there are really two identical except that one is a half-length and the other the head only--are of this series, and most interesting and virile productions.

The Huntington Portraits.

There is no mystery about the Macbeth Gallery Lincoln portraits--for there are also two of them, one being of Mrs. Lincoln. Concerning them a gallery spokesman had this to say:

"The Huntington portraits of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln are recent additions to the few on record as having been painted from life. While at least two posthumous portraits of Lincoln by Huntington are known to exist, one of them being the large canvas owned by the Union League Club and commissioned by the club in 1865, it had not been known until the recent discovery of these pictures that Huntington was one of the group who painted Lincoln and his wife from actual sittings.

"The information as to this appears on the back of each canvas in Huntington's own printed characters. On Lincoln's is simply the record 'From Sitting.' On the reverse of the portrait of Mary Todd are the words 'Painted from Sitting. The same period as President Lincoln's, which was painted first. Daniel Huntington.'

"The pictures are believed to have been painted in 1865, when Huntington was serving his first term as president of the National Academy and shortly before he was elected to

SUN, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1932.

FEB 15 1932

THE NEW YORK SUN, MON

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12
April 6th, 1932

Mr. L. A. Warren
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Mr. Warren

I enclose the data on the "Shean" portrait of Lincoln, with which you are undoubtedly familiar and which I am recalling to your attention, at this time, because it is being offered by the P. Jackson Higgs Gallery of New York at the very attractive price of five thousand dollars.

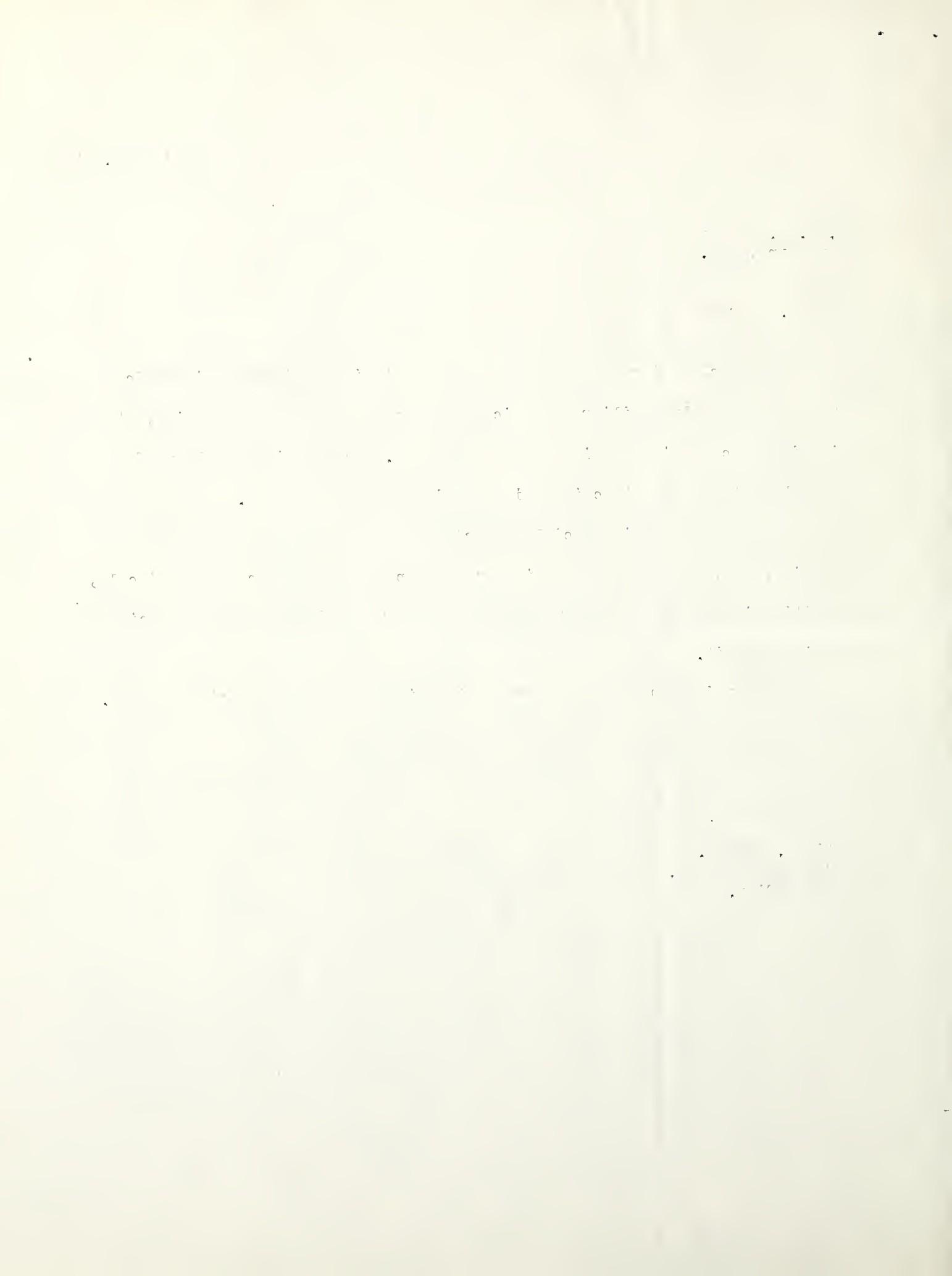
I am engaged in special publicity work for some of the New York Galleries, and, knowing of your wide acquaintance among collectors of Lincoln, am writing in the hope that you may offer some suggestions as to the placing of this portrait.

Assuring you that any such advice will be deeply appreciated, I am,

Yours very truly

Nettie R. Arnold

Nettie R. Arnold,
15 Claremont Avenue.
New York City.



THE ACCEPTED LIKENESS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Within the comparatively short time since the death of Lincoln, the figure of the Emancipator has been seriously distorted by the forces of legend and adoration. In the field of art, distortion has taken the form of portraits and statues over-emphasizing particular characteristics of the man, usually his gaunt figure and sympathetic kindness.

Among the portraitists of Lincoln, Shean is, perhaps, pre-eminent as a painter of the real Lincoln. He devoted unceasing effort to searching the records and the likenesses drawn, painted and engraved during the great President's lifetime, and he painted, in all, seven portraits of Lincoln.

The painting which is the subject of this volume was bought directly from the artist's widow, and is almost identical with the canvas unveiled in the Assembly Chamber of the Nevada Legislature in 1915, and which may be looked upon as the accepted likeness of Lincoln, as the comments of two authorities, quoted below, indicate.

Opinion of Horatio King

Horatio C King, son of Horatio C. King of Lincoln's own cabinet, wrote to Shean - "After the most careful consideration I do not hesitate to say that I regard your portrait of Mr. Lincoln, the three quarter face with hair slightly falling over the forehead, as the most satisfactory I have seen. It recalls most vividly the features of the great Commoner, when President, as I was accustomed to see him. It deserves to be the accepted likeness for all time. The success of your long and painstaking efforts is worthy, not only of the highest praise, but also of the gratitude of the American people.

Yours very truly

(Signed) Horatio C. King"

Opinion of Ida M. Tarbell

Mr. King's opinion, that of an eye-witness, is supported by the opinion of Ida M. Tarbell, one of the best known of Lincoln's biographers, who says: -

"It is one of the few paintings of Mr. Lincoln which I have seen which I have felt was worth while."

An Historical Document

Charles M. Shean himself wrote:- "The painting is an original work and is the result of close study in which all material was exhaustively studied and compared. Every effort was made to produce a characteristic and lifelike portrait, and one which I am convinced has the value of an historical document."

Record and Authenticity

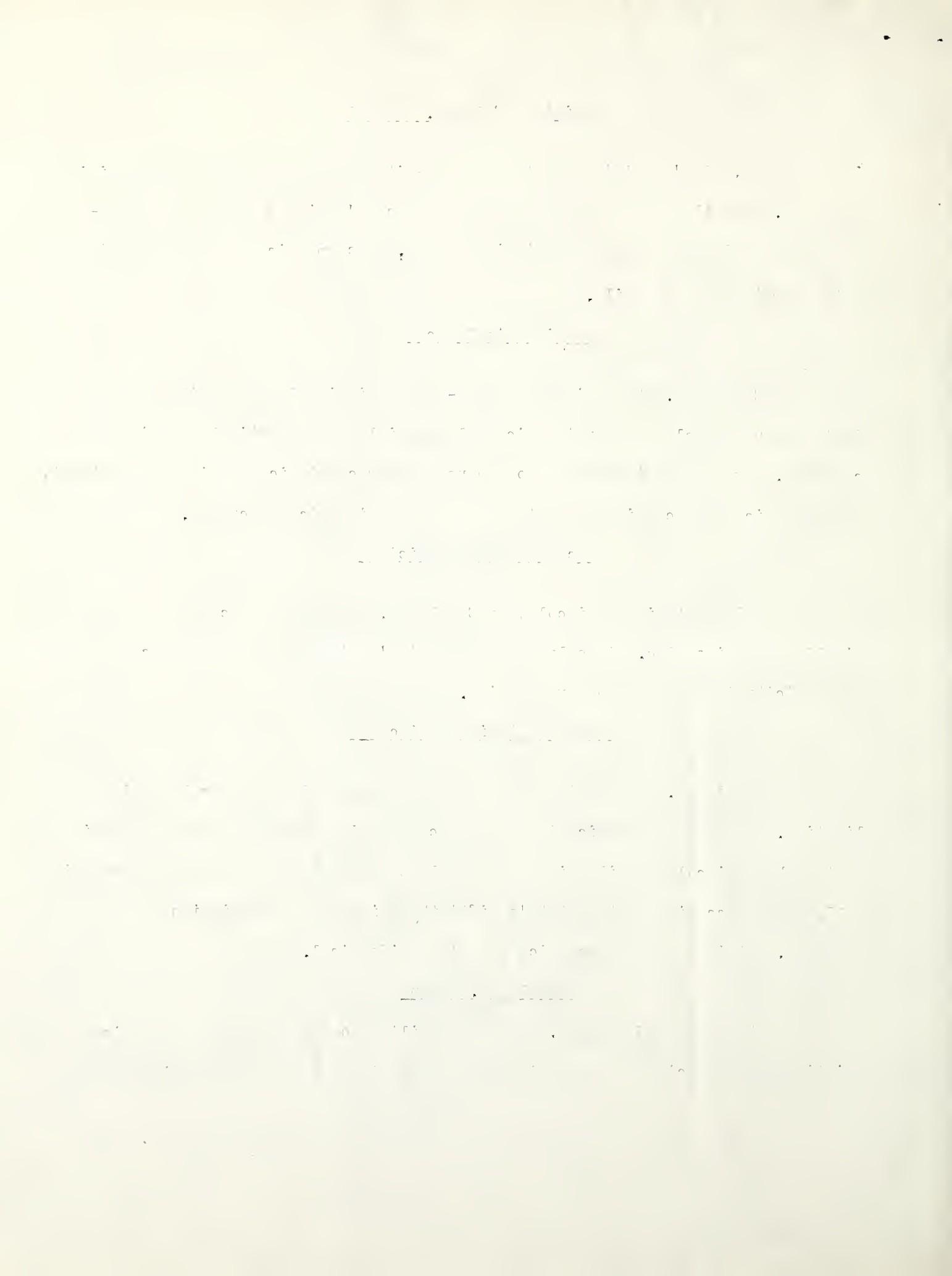
This portrait of Lincoln, by Charles M. Shean, was purchased by the Ainslie Galleries, Inc. directly from the artist's widow, so that its record of authenticity is not open to any question.

Shean Portrait of Lincoln

Charles M. Shean painted at least seven portraits of Lincoln during his lifetime. Of the canvas which is the subject of this volume, what has been said of the Shean Lincoln unveiled in the Assembly Chamber of the Nevada Legislature in 1915, on the occasion of the State's Fiftieth anniversary of Admission, may be repeated. It is one of three which are almost identical.

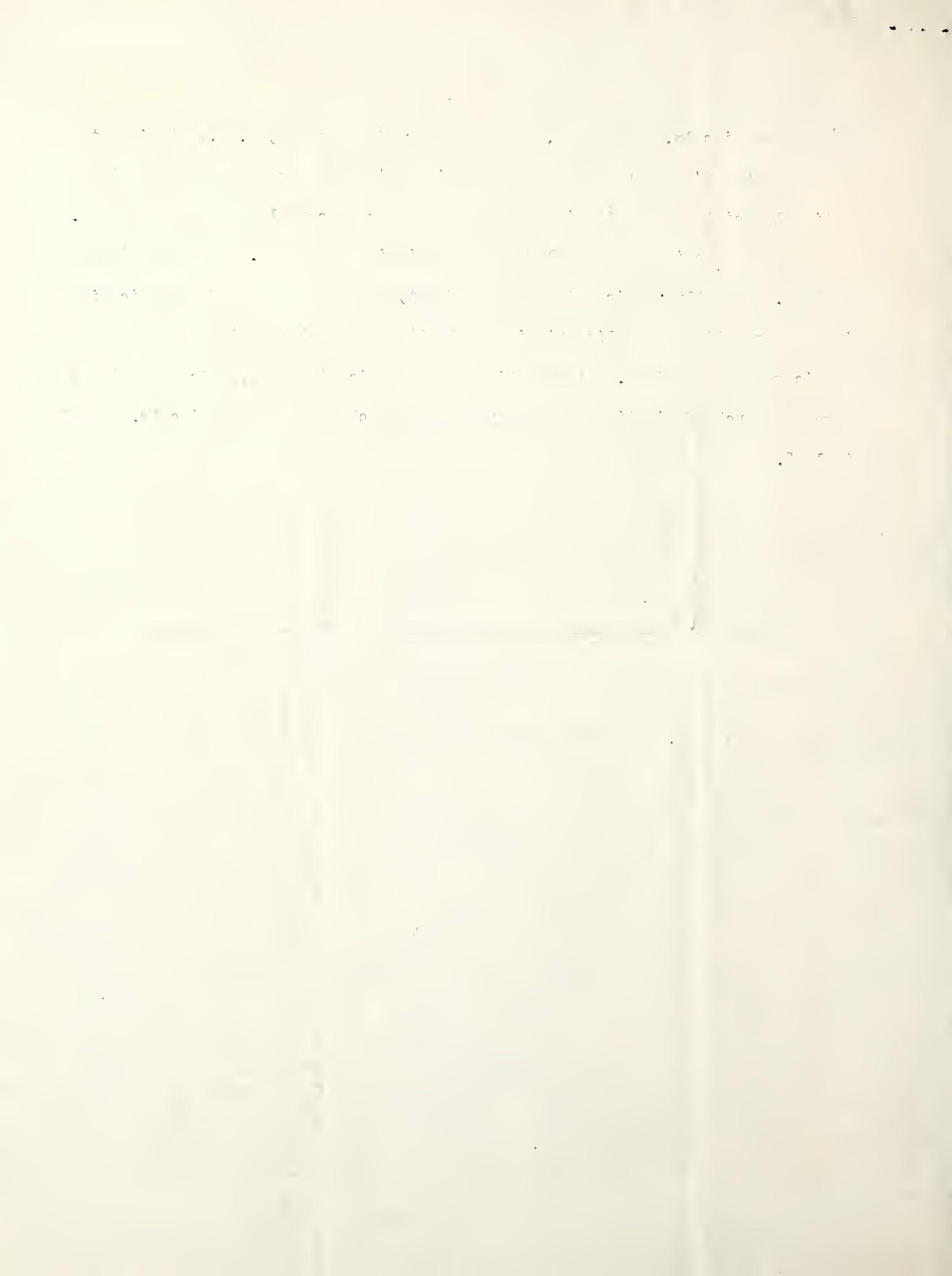
Charles M. Shean

The name of Charles M. Shean is familiar to every student of American painting; and especially notable in the list of his canvases are his likenesses



of Abraham Lincoln. Charles M. Shean was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., studied at the Art Student's League of New York and in Paris, and became a member of the National Society of Mural Painters and of the Architectural League of New York.

He received the medal for mural painting at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904. Ardently American in matters of Art, he wrote "A Plea for Americanism in the Decoration of Public Buildings" (1901) and "Mural Paintings from the American Point of View". It was this ardent Americanism, too, which led him to devote so much of his time and energy to the search for the true Lincoln. He died in 1925.



shean, Chas M - Vanberg

April 9, 1932

Mrs. Nattie R. Arnold
15 Claremont Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Madam:

We are constantly having inquiries here about Lincoln portraits which are available and will be very glad indeed to place on file the information you have enclosed and will be pleased to advise you of anyone who shows an interest in this particular item.

Very sincerely yours,

Director

LAW:LH

1880. 1881. 1882. 1883. 1884. 1885. 1886. 1887. 1888. 1889.

1880. 1881. 1882. 1883. 1884. 1885. 1886. 1887. 1888. 1889.

6

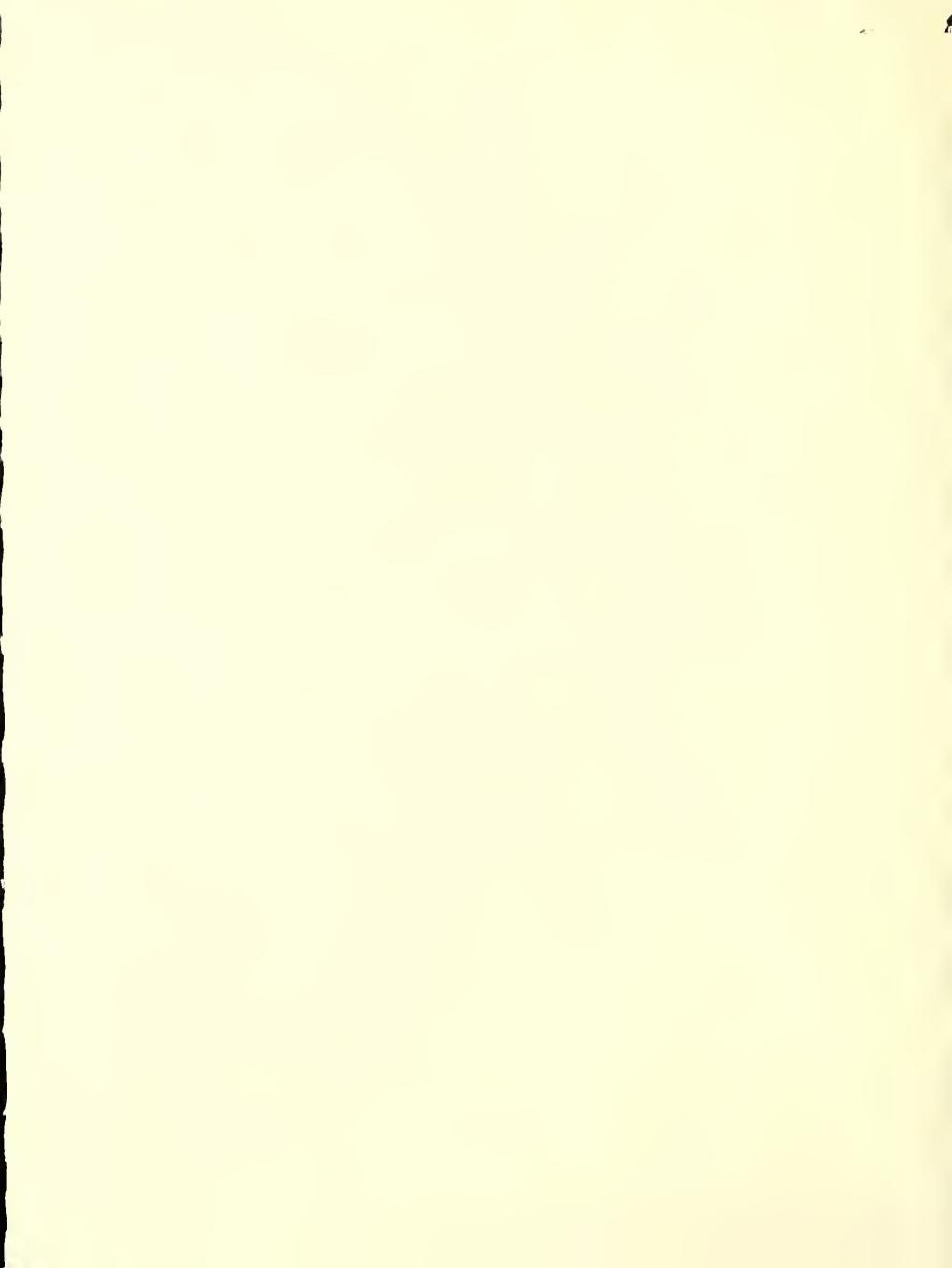
January 28, 1934

Mr. Louis A. Warren, Director
Lincoln Historical Research
Foundation
Dear Sir

Last August we had
a little correspondence
regarding the Lincoln
portraits painted by
my husband, the late
Charles M. Shaw.

To my deep regret
you did not see fit to
purchase any of the
photographs.

I am mailing in
separate folder one



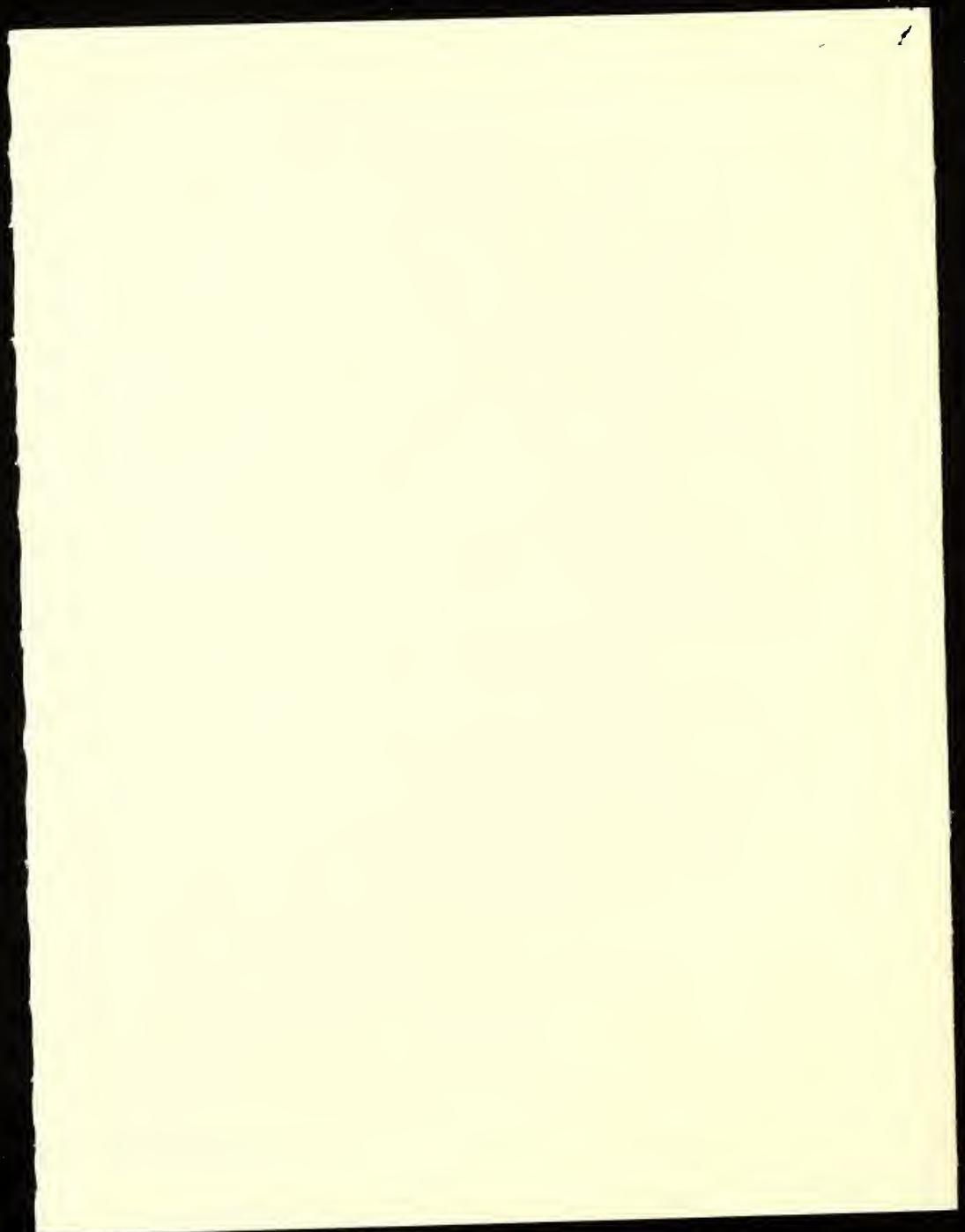
of these photographs,
also a clipping from
the "New York Sun"
relating to the portrait.

Please accept the
photograph for the
Lincoln Historical Research
Foundation with my com-
pliments.

I would like your
society to have at
least one, and would
appreciate its display,
if possible. Thank you.

Very sincerely yours,

Mary Shean
(mrs.) Chas. M. Shean
75 Van Buren St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.



August 9, 1933.

Mrs. Louis A. Warren;

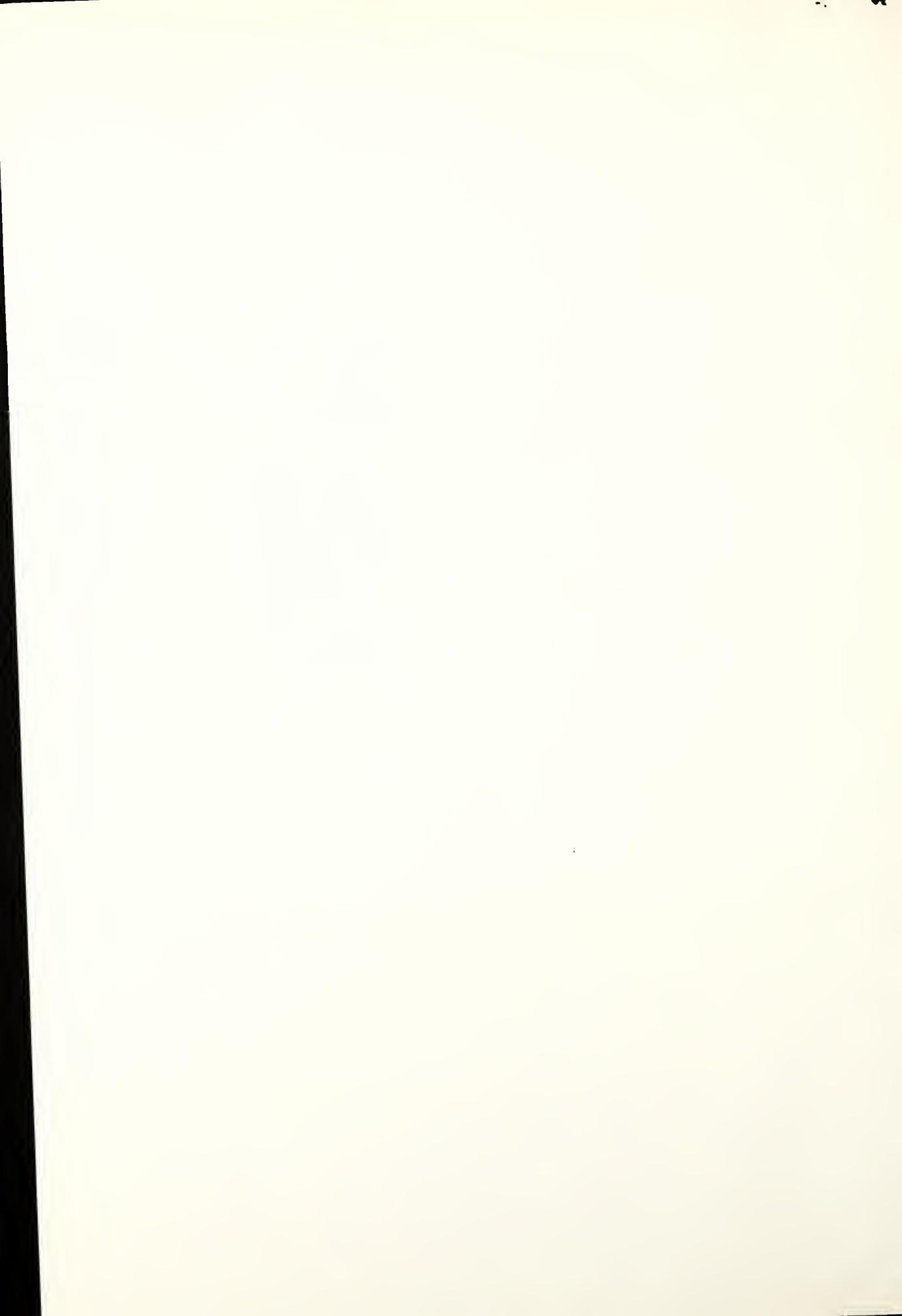
Dear Sir,

Having been informed that the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company of Fort Wayne, Indiana, has sponsored a Lincoln Historical Research Foundation, of which you are director, I am taking the liberty of addressing you.

The late Charles M. Shean, my husband, painted a number of Lincoln portraits, solely from the life mask, in various poses. One three quarter length was purchased by the State of Nevada, and is now hanging in the Capitol of Carson City.

Mr. Shean's aim was to show the great President as he really was, without any attempt at idealization. I am enclosing herewith clippings to give you a slight idea of the paintings.

I have at present the bust portrait pictured in the "New York Sun," also a



three quarter length, with head
in similar position, but wear-
ing a beard.

Have also photographs
of these portraits, and of
the portrait in Nevada, and
the bust portrait to which
Miss Tarbell referred.

I should be glad to
send one or more of these
photographs for a nominal
sum, and would be happy
to sell a portrait for a very
reasonable price.

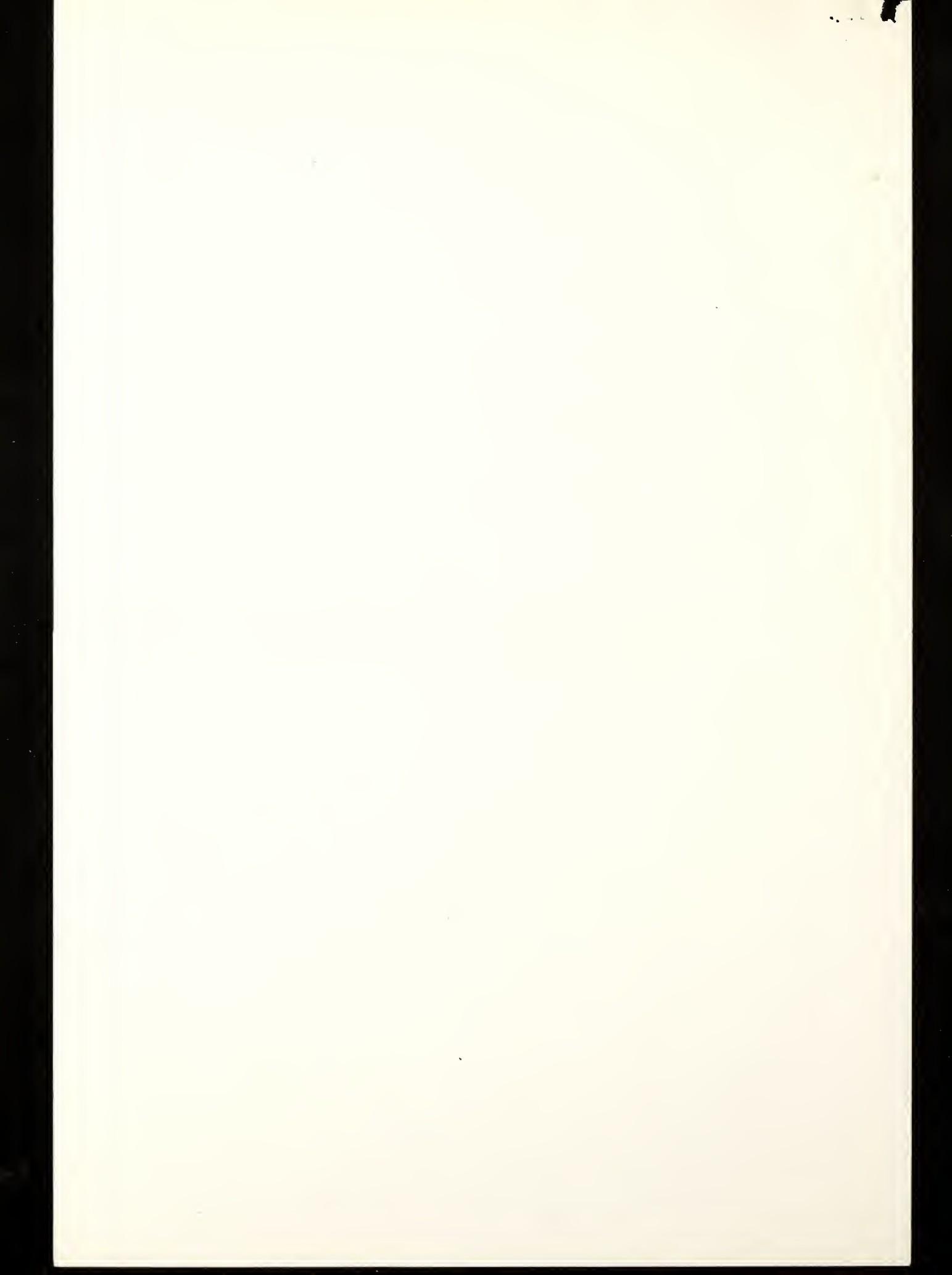
May I hope to hear
from you? Thank you.

Mary Shean

175 Van Buren St.

Brooklyn,

New York.



Mary Shean
(Cl. Sh) (Photographs
etcades.
Tolka mask
Nish " "

August 30, 1933

Mrs. Mary Shean
75 Van Buren St.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dear Madam:

Thank you very much for submitting to us information relating to the portrait of Abraham Lincoln taken by your husband.

While I do not think we would be in a position to acquire the oil painting, we might wish to have some reproduction or photographs of his work such as you suggest are available.

If you will kindly advise me as to how much they are, and if the price seems satisfactory, we will be glad to order them.

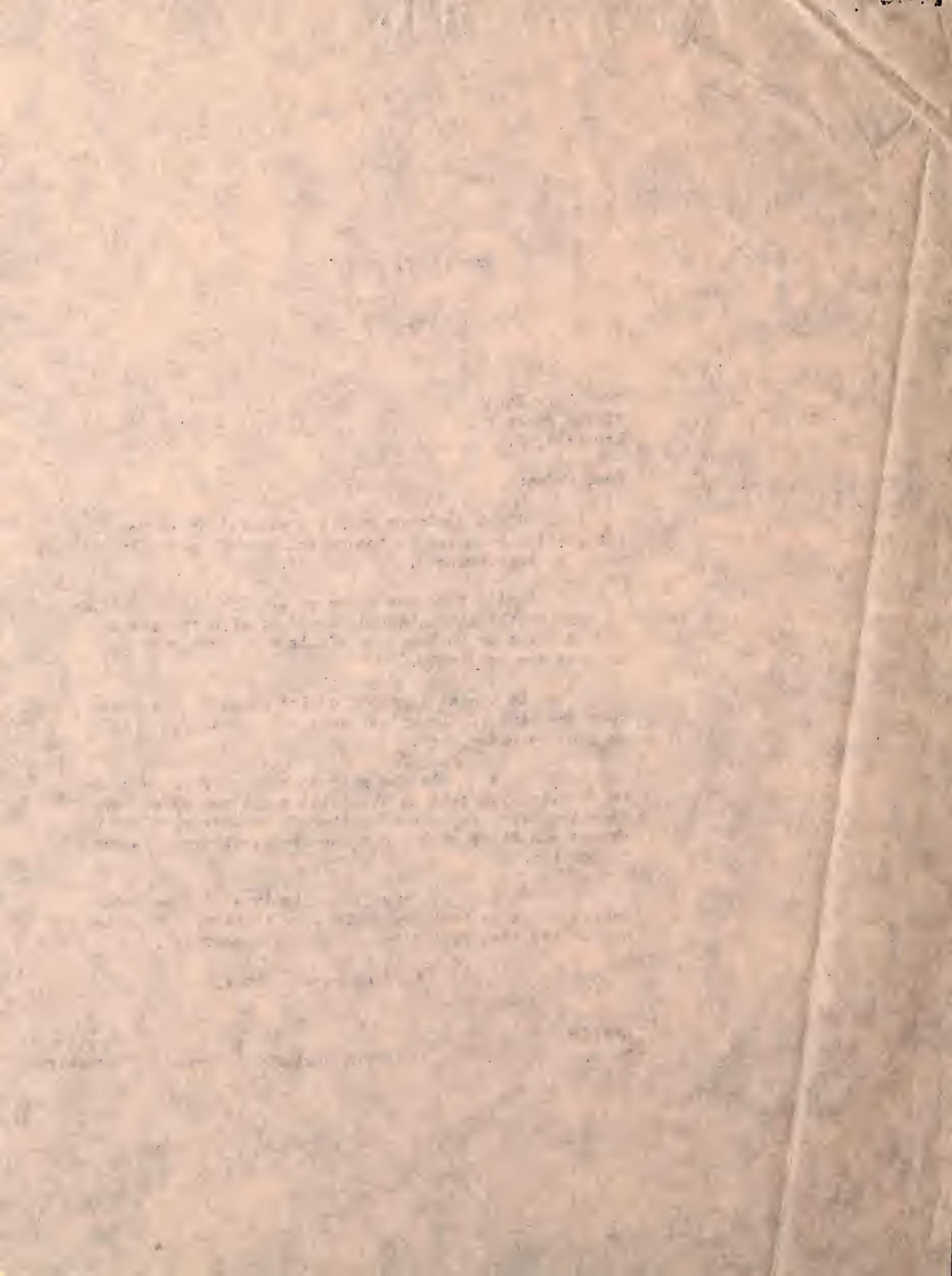
We will also be glad to keep on file here the information you sent us about the paintings as we have many inquiries here for material of this kind and I expect our files on Lincolnians are as complete as any in America.

We are returning the clippings of a personal nature which we feel you would like to keep, retaining one or two that deal directly with the portrait.

Very sincerely yours,

LAW:EB
Encs.

Director
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation



September 4, 1933

Mr. Louis A. Warren,
Director, Lincoln Historical
Research Foundation,

Dear Sir.

Many thanks
for your kind letter
of August 30. I have
photographs of almost
all the Lincoln portraits
painted by my husband,
and will be very happy
to sell any or all of them.

One is approximate-
ly 6" x 8"; photograph of the
Nevada portrait, which
is a three quarter length
figure, at \$2.00; one 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
same picture, at \$2.50 and

One front view of head,
bust picture, without
beard; subject of the
article in "New York
Sun," this photograph,
is $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7$; including the
frame it is 7×9 , at \$2.50

Any of these may
be had in glossy or
mat finish.

Sincerely yours.

Mary Shean,
(Mrs. Chas. M. Shean)

75 Van Buren St.

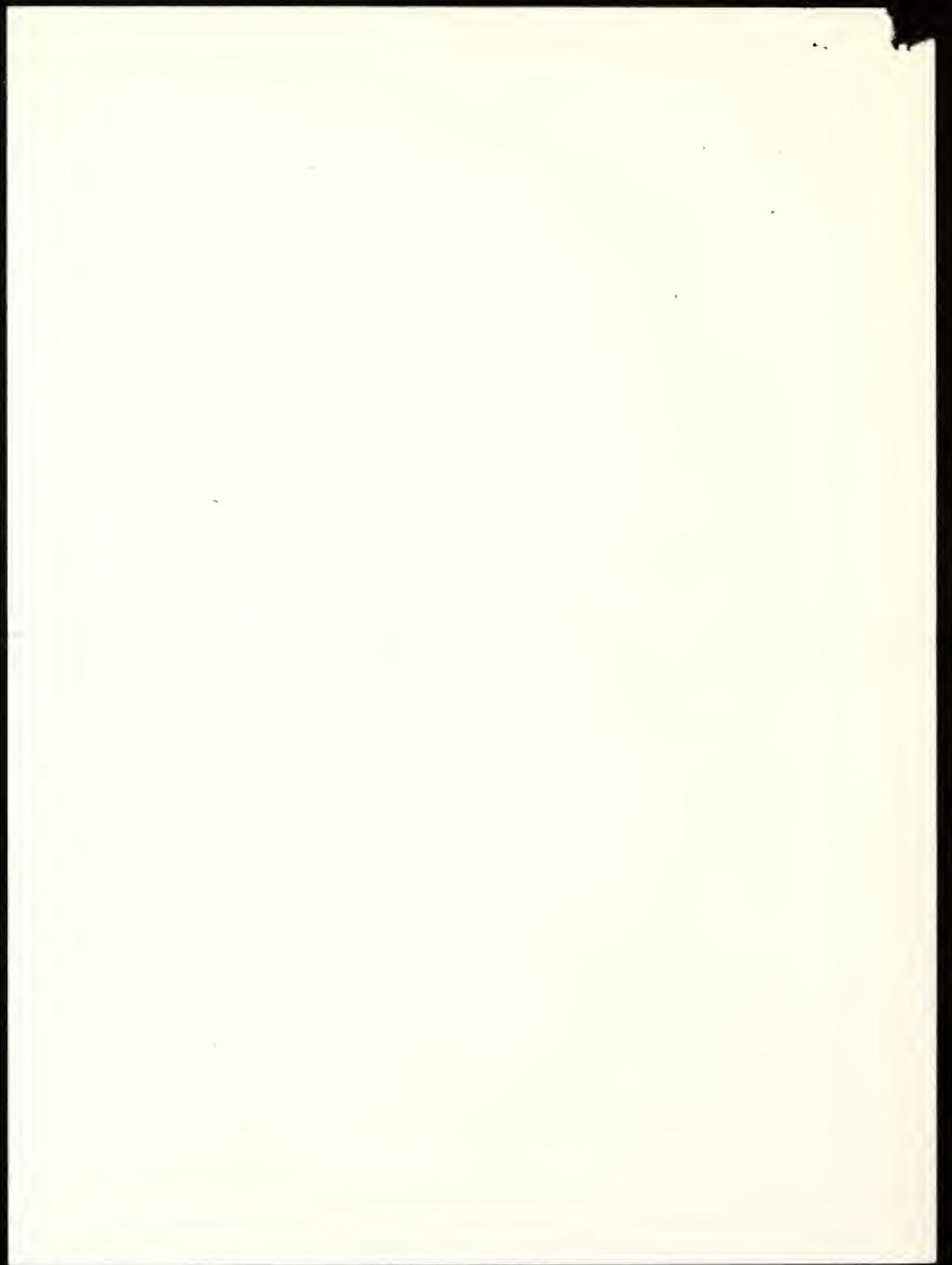
Brooklyn
New York

one 10" x 13" at \$5.00 each.

Then I have one bust picture, of head admired by Miss Ida Tarbell, which is the same view of head as in the Nevada portrait, in $6\frac{1}{2}'' \times 8\frac{1}{2}''$ size, at \$3.00

One bust picture, same view of head, (which is three quarter view) but with hair in different arrangement, 7" x 9" at \$2.50

One standing three quarter length figure, $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 9''$; head in front view, with beard, \$1.00



February 2, 1934

Mrs. Charles M. Shean
75 Van Buren St.,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Shean:

Please feel that we appreciate very much your forwarding to us a photograph of the painting done by Mr. Shean.

Our failure to acquire the items which you have for sale is not due to our lack of appreciation but a very strict economy which we have been practicing here at the Foundation for the past month.

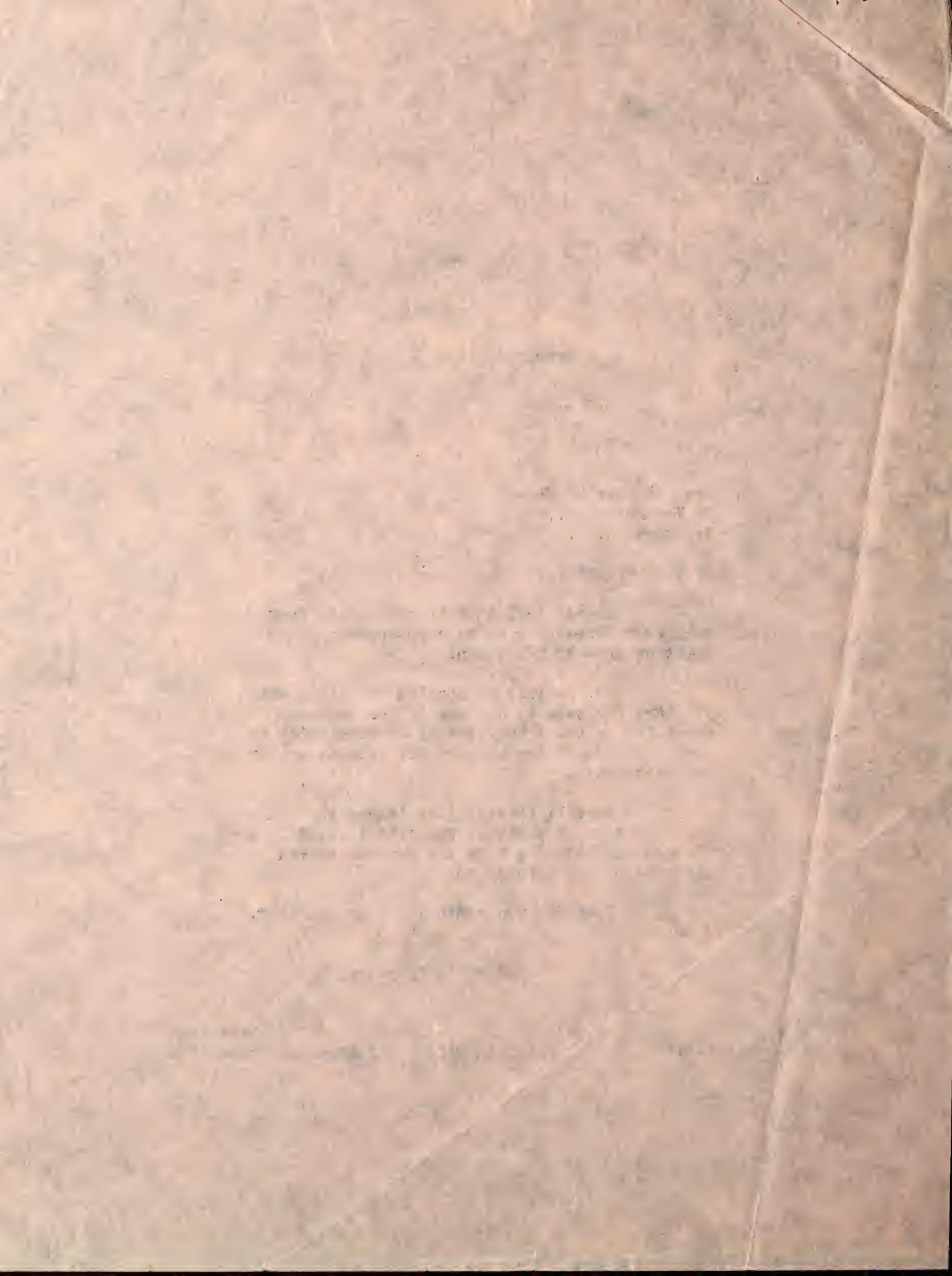
We will be very glad indeed to call to the attention of visitors who care to look through our painting file the very excellent likeness of Mr. Shean's work.

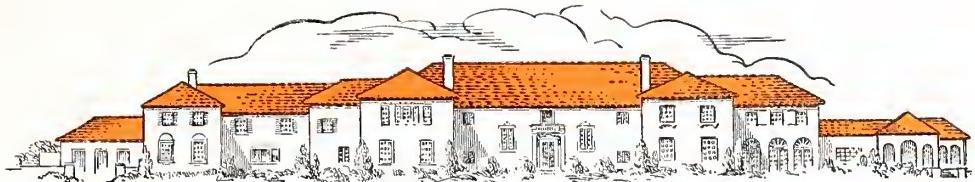
Thanking you again for your courtesy,
I am

Respectfully yours,

LAW:EB

Director
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation





PHILBROOK ART CENTER

A PROPERTY OF THE SOUTHWESTERN ART ASSOCIATION

2727 SOUTH ROCKFORD ROAD

TELEPHONE 4-7141

TULSA 5, OKLAHOMA

VICTOR C. HURT, PRESIDENT

March 15th, 1948.

Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director
Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. Warren:

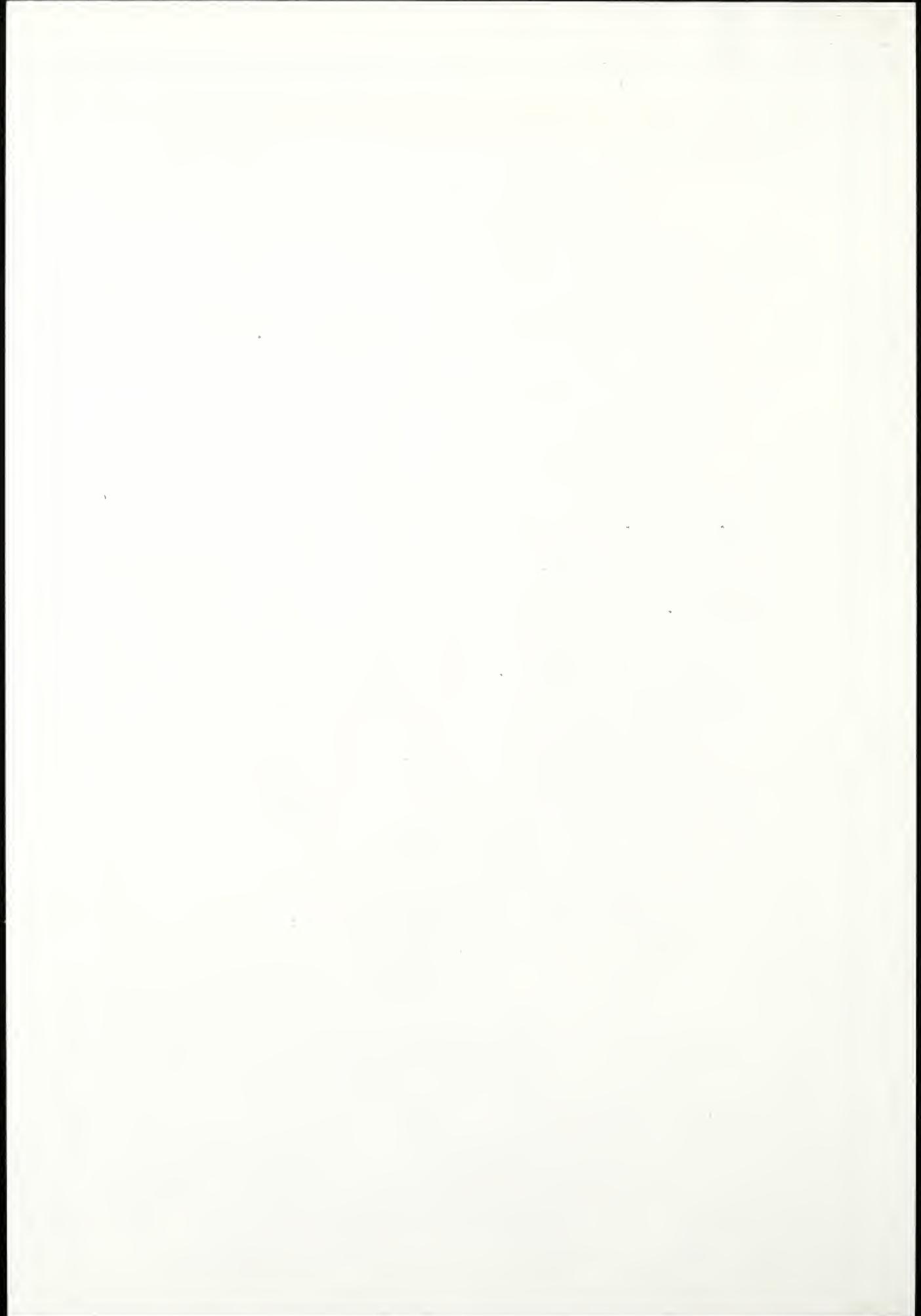
Philbrook Art Center recently acquired a large collection of paintings. In this group of paintings there were several which were earmarked for sale. Among this group is a painting of Abraham Lincoln, by Shean. It is an unusually strong painting and one which has attracted considerable attention. Knowing that you are particularly interested in objects of art concerning Lincoln, I am writing to you with the thought that in case you are interested in this painting we might forward it to you for inspection. The enclosed photograph is not a good one, however, it will at least give you an idea of the subject.

I shall be glad to hear from you concerning this matter.

Very truly yours,

VCH:EG

Enc.



March 22, 1948

Mr. Victor C. Hurt, President
Philbrook Art Center
2727 South Rockford Road
Tulsa, 5, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Hurt:

The policy which we have been pursuing here for several years does not allow us to invest in original or early paintings; however, we do often have inquiries for such items and would be pleased to keep the picture in our files in order that we might call attention to it for those who are in the market for such items.

Very truly yours,

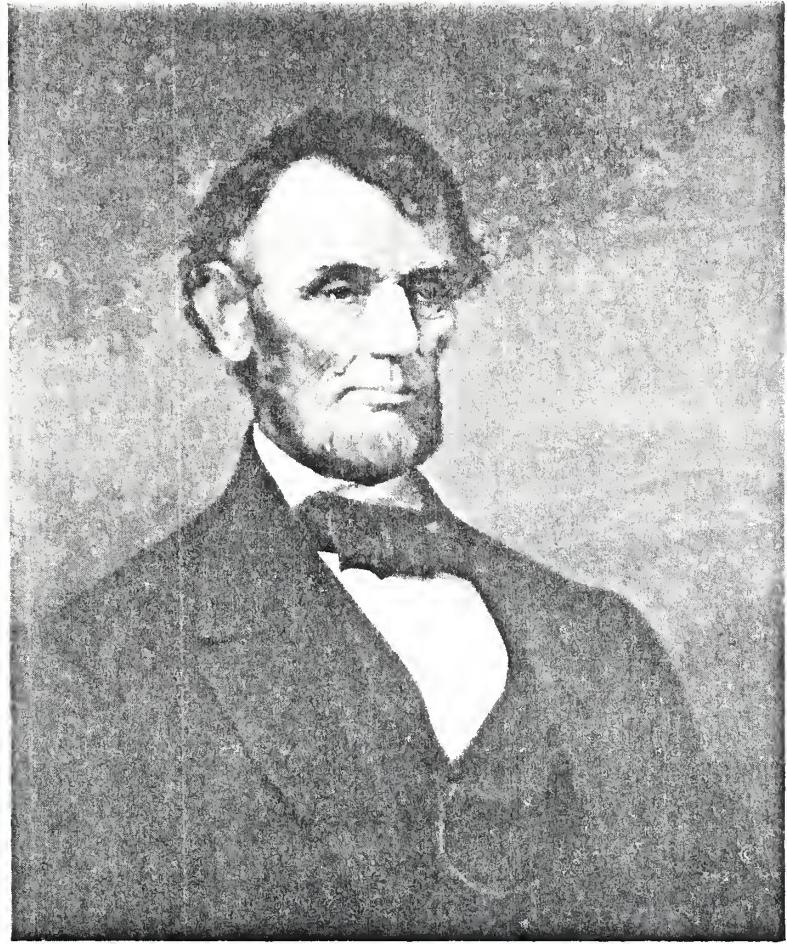
LAW:EB

Director

1867. 10. 25.

Agave deserti, Greene

Agave deserti Greene



30. PORTRAIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Painted by Charles M. Shean, 1912. This painting of Lincoln is based chiefly on a Brady photograph but it would appear that the artist has made a careful study of the life portraits in order to paint what is an unusually satisfying portrait of Lincoln. Oil on canvas, 30 by 25 inches. Gold leaf frame. \$275.

The Pennell Bros., Retailers
Winter 1920

SHEAN, CHARLES M.

DRAWER 19A

Artists - S

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$\left(\begin{array}{l} \alpha \\ \beta \\ \gamma \end{array} \right)$